

# El Camino College

## 2021 Student Campus Climate Survey



Full Report

### Executive Summary

In Spring 2021, the Student Campus Climate Survey was conducted online in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. The table below provides key highlights from the survey results.

<i>Overall Experience</i>	Students continue having a positive experience with El Camino.
<i>Physical Environment &amp; Safety</i>	Students who interacted with the campus during Spring 2021 think it is well maintained, but more can be done to help them feel safe at night.
<i>Campus Life &amp; Activities</i>	Students feel more connected to El Camino than they reported in the 2018 survey.
<i>Diversity &amp; Inclusion</i>	Overall, respondents believe El Camino supports its diverse groups of students.
<i>Services &amp; Resources</i>	Instructors and staff are generally accessible and concerned for students' well-being. Students who seek support (academic and non-academic) can generally find it.
<i>Classroom Instruction</i>	Students continue to feel comfortable approaching instructors both in and out of class time. Students' classwork mostly revolves around critical thinking, although memorization continues to be an important part of the work too.
<i>Food Insecurity</i>	Many students have challenges with food insecurity. Black/African American students are especially impacted.
<i>Housing Insecurity/Homelessness</i>	Housing cost increase mostly affected Black/African American, Latino and female students. There are students experiencing homelessness or on the verge of homelessness.

### Student Campus Climate Survey Background

El Camino College (ECC) “makes a positive difference in people’s lives. We provide innovative and excellent comprehensive educational programs and services that promote student learning, equity, and success in collaboration with our diverse communities.” The college periodically surveys the student population to determine whether it is living up to its mission and to determine areas for improvement.

The Campus Climate survey developed by El Camino College stakeholders intends to capture students' perspectives and needs regarding their enrollment and success at the college. The following questions informed the development of the 2021 Student Campus Climate Survey:

<i>Overall Experience</i>	<i>Physical Environment &amp; Safety</i>
How is students' overall experience with El Camino College?	To what extent students feel safe and comfortable navigating the ECC campus?
<i>Campus Life &amp; Activities</i>	<i>Diversity &amp; Inclusion</i>
To what extent students feel part of the ECC community and participate in its activities?	To what extent students feel ECC respects and supports its diverse student population?
<i>Services &amp; Resources</i>	<i>Classroom Instruction</i>
To what extent students feel satisfied with the services and resources ECC provides?	To what extent students feel satisfied with the technology they have for classes, their interaction with instructors, and the type of work they are asked to do?
<i>Food Insecurity</i>	<i>Housing Insecurity/Homelessness</i>
How frequently students struggle with food security and use food security resources provided by ECC?	To what extent students struggle with housing security and homelessness and reach to ECC for help in these areas?

Findings presented in this report highlight changes between 2018 and 2021 survey results, variation among different student groups, and areas where the College is doing well and where it can improve.

## Methodology

A committee representing various constituencies across the institution developed the Student Campus Climate Survey. It was developed in parallel with the Campus Climate survey for employees, also conducted during the Spring 2021 term. The survey consisted of 10 open-ended questions and 108 multiple-choice questions. Of the latter, 17 questions were borrowed from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), which is a national survey administered by the University of Texas.<sup>1</sup>

The Campus Climate survey was conducted online during the Spring 2021 term due to the Coronavirus pandemic which caused campuses across the nation to turn to remote learning environments. Students were invited to participate by email as well as through a link placed on their student page in the Canvas platform. The survey had a 4.6% response rate with 860 surveys answered, giving a 3.3% margin of error. The margin of error is used to determine the range within which the true population average may fall. Therefore, it indicates that the

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


<sup>1</sup> The CCSSE survey was last administered at ECC in 2014.

expected agreement of the total population will be within 3.3% above or below the responses of the survey sample group. The 2018 pre-pandemic version of the survey was administered to a sample of sections during class time, producing a 73% response rate and a 2% margin of error.

## Respondents' Profile

In general, survey respondents had similar characteristics with the overall student population. The characteristics in Table 1 indicate some of the differences.

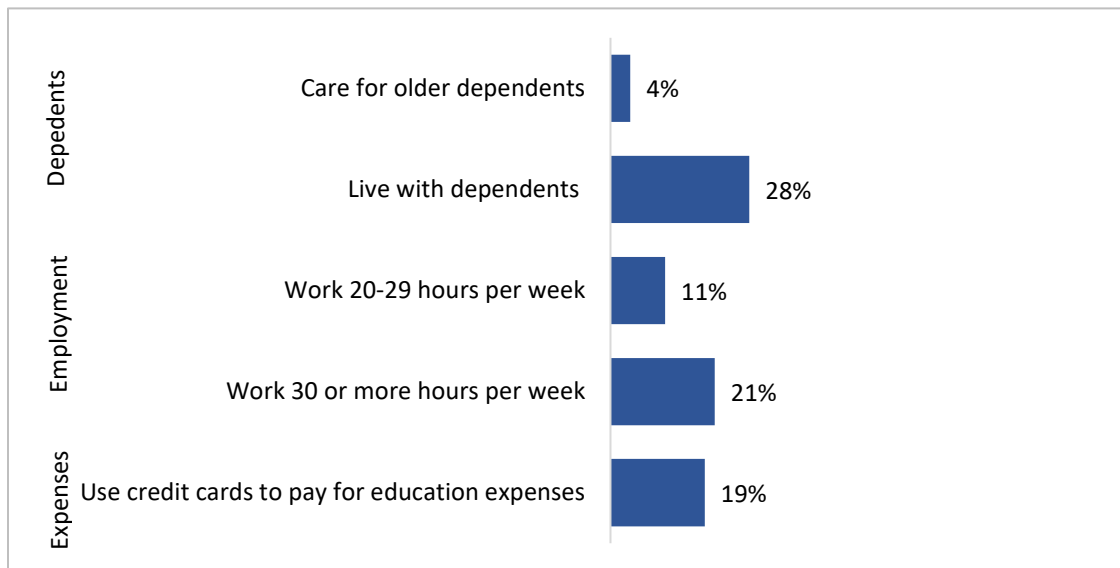
*Table 1: Demographic Differences of Respondents from Student Population*

Criteria	Characteristics	Survey Respondents	ECC Students	Sample Comparison
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>	66%	56%	 <b>10%</b>
<b>Race</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	9%	4%	 <b>5%</b>
	<b>Hispanic</b>	42%	51%	 <b>9%</b>
	<b>White</b>	17%	14%	 <b>3%</b>
<b>Ed Goal</b>	<b>Transfer or Degree</b>	92%	79%	 <b>13%</b>
<b>Course load</b>	<b>Full Time (12+)</b>	46%	32%	 <b>14%</b>
	<b>Part Time (0.5-5.5)</b>	16%	27%	 <b>11%</b>
<b>Units Completed</b>	<b>&lt;15 units</b>	17%	26%	 <b>9%</b>
	<b>15-29.5 units</b>	21%	17%	 <b>4%</b>
	<b>30 units</b>	29%	25%	 <b>4%</b>
	<b>60+</b>	24%	16%	 <b>8%</b>

As observed in Table 1 above, female students, White students, and students with desire to transfer or attain an associate's degree were over-sampled compared to the overall student population. Full-time students with 12 or more units were over-sampled in the survey compared to the overall student population, while students with less than 15 units were under-sampled. Survey respondents have completed more units compared to the general population. Students with an unknown or undeclared race were also over-sampled compared to the overall student population.

Figure 1 below illustrates additional respondents' characteristics. Almost two in seven respondents have dependents living at home, including 4% who are caring for elder or disabled adults. Almost one in three respondents work at least 20 hours per week, with 21% working at least 30 hours each week. Finally, 19% of the respondents stated using credit cards to pay for their educational expenses.

Figure 1: Respondents' Economic Characteristics



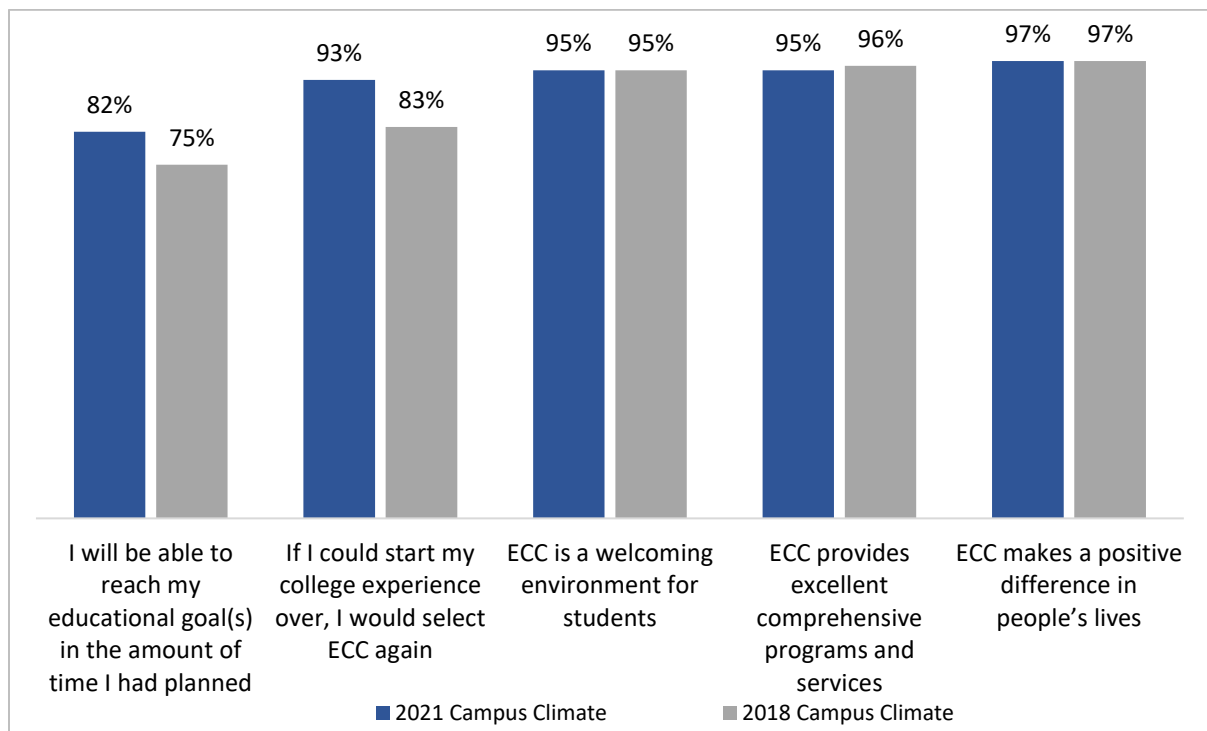
## Survey Findings

### Overall Experience

#### ***Students have a positive view of their experience at ECC***

El Camino College continues to enjoy a positive reputation among students. Figure 2 shows the responses and comparisons to the 2018 Student Campus Climate Survey. Students overwhelmingly agree that ECC is a welcoming environment, makes a positive difference in people's lives, and provides excellent programs and services. There was an increase in the percentage of students who believed they could complete their goals within the expected timeframe, and an increase in the percentage of students who would choose ECC again.

Figure 1: Overall Experience 2018 vs. 2021

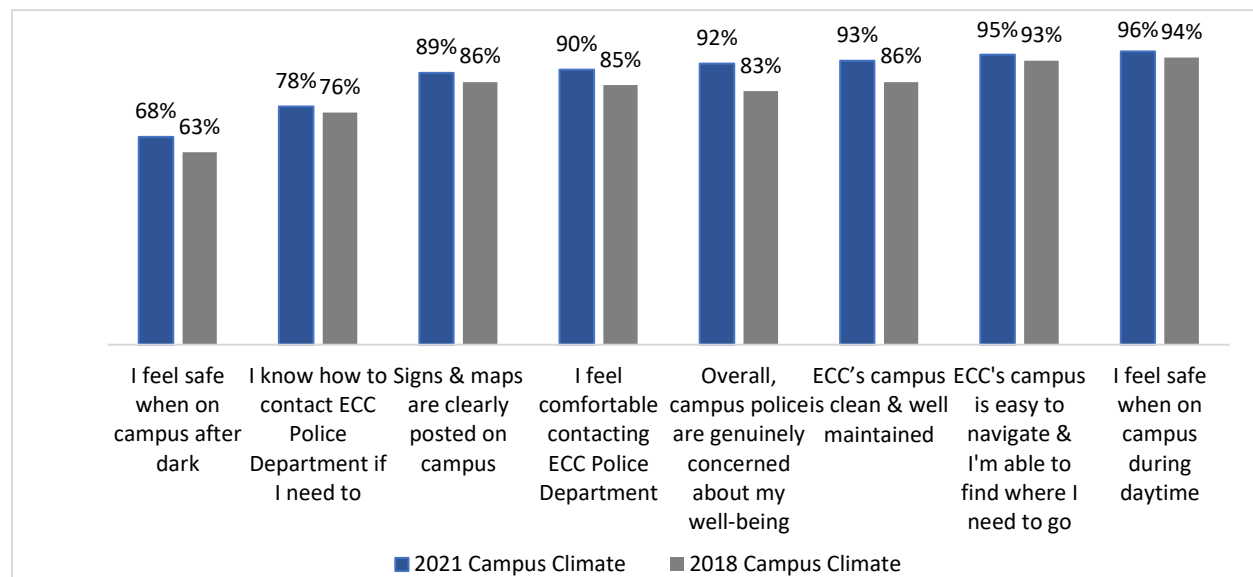


## Physical Environment & Safety

### ***Students like the physical environment and campus police, but more can be done to help evening students feel safe after dark***

Because a fraction of the course offerings was offered on campus during the Spring 2021 term, only students who indicated they were enrolled in sections that required them to be physically on campus were asked questions about the physical environment. Figure 3 illustrates the positive view students have of the campus environment.

Figure 2: Physical Environment 2018 vs. 2021



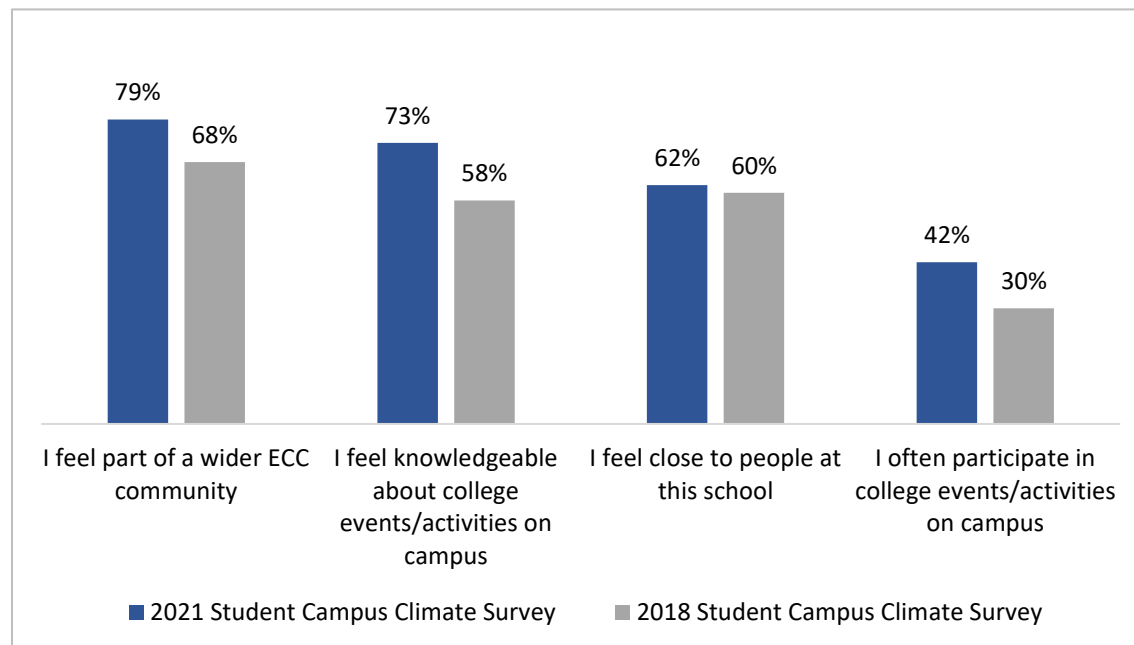
Students generally feel safe on campus during the daytime. However, a third of the students do not feel safe at night. This is mainly due to the responses of female students who do not feel safe at night (39%) compared to males (14%). There has been an increase in the percentage of students who feel campus police are concerned about student well-being, as well as those who feel the campus is well maintained.

## Campus Life & Activities

### ***Students' connection to ECC has increased***

Compared to the 2018 Student Campus Climate Survey, connection to the campus has increased as seen in Figure 4. Students who indicated they often participate in campus activities increased from 30% to 42%. The increase in knowledge about events and activities may play a role in the increased participation. While there has been little change in the feeling of closeness to others at ECC, there is an 11% increase in those saying they feel part of the ECC community.

Figure 4: Students' Connection to ECC



## Diversity & Inclusion

### ***Students believe ECC works to support its diverse population***

Students overwhelmingly believe that El Camino College strives to respect and support its diverse population of students. Students were asked about support for specific groups and each resulted in greater than 90% positive ratings (see Table 2 below).

Four additional categories (age, homelessness, parents, and immigration status) were added to the categories used in the 2018 survey. One area of concern is related to the percentage of students who indicate they had a negative experience at ECC because of one of the categories listed in Table 2. Thirty percent of students claimed to have some negative experience with other students or employees. For Black/African American students, this rate jumps to 46%. Asian males and students with disabilities also report negative experiences more than their peers. Additionally, while 93% of respondents feel ECC faculty and staff represent the diversity of the campus, 8% less of Black/African American students agree with this statement.

*Table 2: ECC's Support to Its Diverse Student Population 2018 vs. 2021*

	2018	2021
ECC respects and supports students from different economic backgrounds	96%	96%
ECC respects and supports students of different ages or generations*		96%
ECC respects and supports students of different genders	96%	97%
ECC respects and supports students of different races/ethnicities	96%	97%
ECC respects and supports students of different sexual orientations	97%	98%
ECC respects and supports students who are homeless*		93%
ECC respects and supports students who are parents*		95%
ECC respects and supports students with different immigration statuses*		97%
ECC respects and supports students with different political affiliations	90%	91%
ECC respects and supports students with different religious affiliations	95%	96%
ECC respects and supports students with disabilities	97%	95%
ECC values the diversity of its student body	93%	96%
<b>I feel comfortable expressing my political views on campus</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>I have had negative experiences with ECC students or employees that I felt were based upon my race, gender, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, age, disability status and/or other**</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>30%</b>
The ethnic mix of the faculty and staff reflects the diversity of the student body	90%	93%

\*This question was not included in the 2018 version of this survey.

\*\*The 2018 version of the survey asked students if they had witnessed or heard about negative experiences, but did not ask about experiencing negative interactions based on these characteristics.

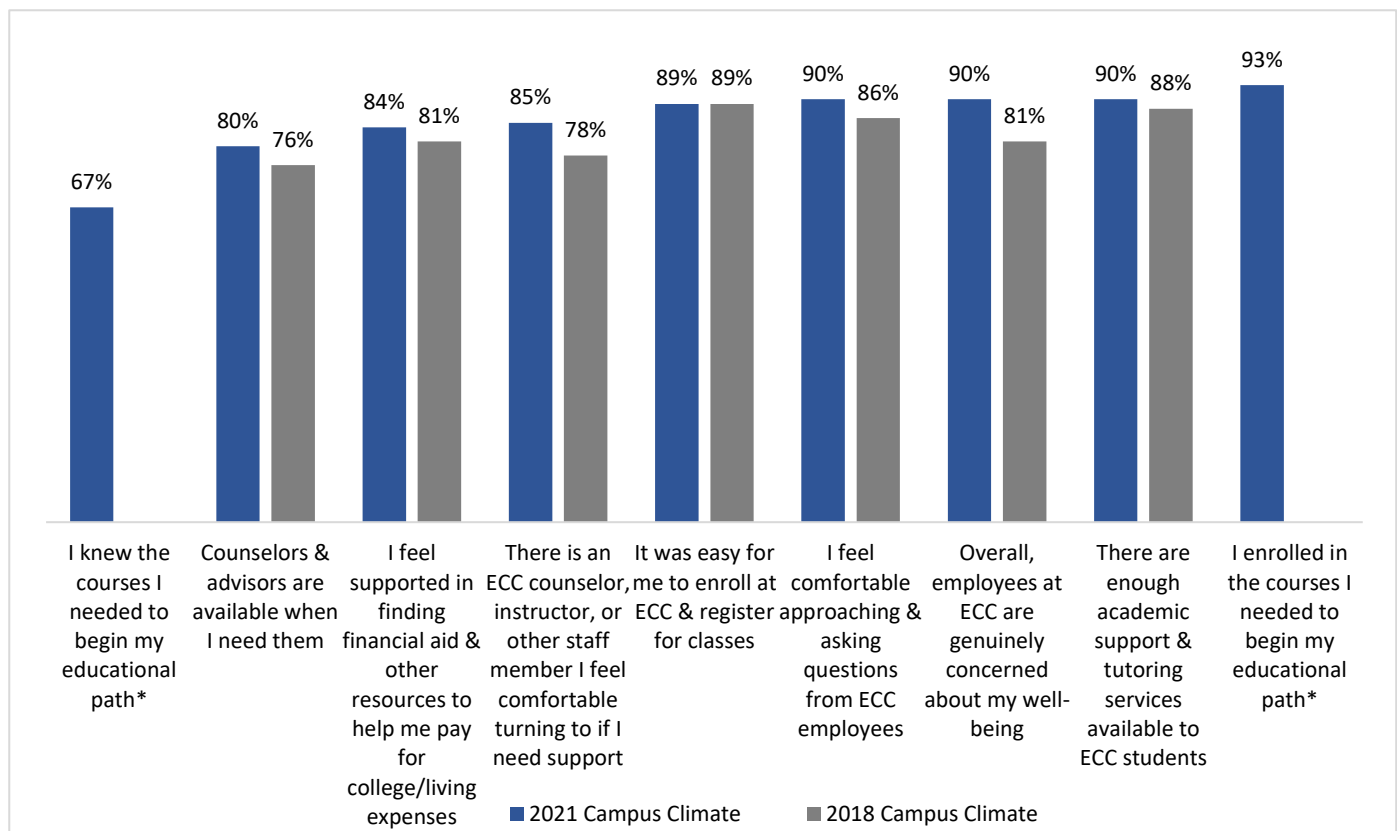
## Services & Resources

### ***Students continue to find support in the online environment***

Overall, students are still feeling supported by ECC, as seen in Figure 5. Almost 90% reported being able to enroll and register for classes with ease. Most students (93%) indicate being able to enroll in the classes they needed, however 1 in 3 students were not sure which classes were those they needed. Eighty percent of the students said counselors were available when needed. There is a general sense that the employees of El Camino are concerned about students, and 85% can identify an employee they can turn to for support. ECC helps students find support academically (90%) with tutoring and other resources. It also helps students find financial support (84%) to pay for college and other expenses.



Figure 5: ECC's Services and Resources 2018 vs. 2021

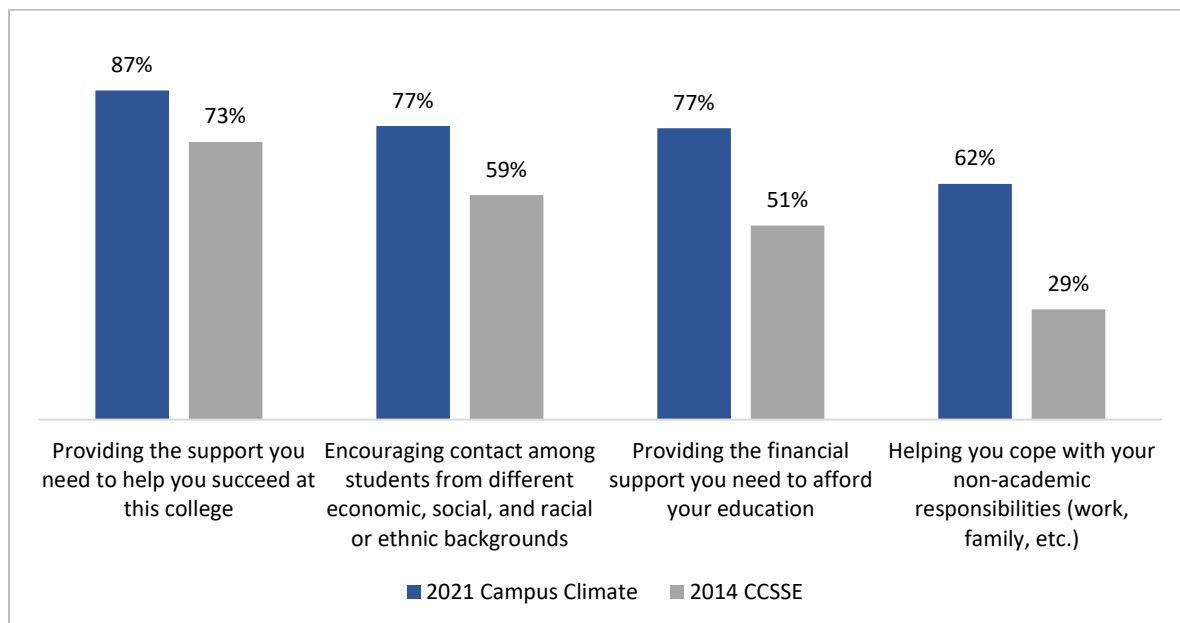


\*This question was not included in the 2018 version of this survey.

### ***El Camino emphasizes the whole student***

El Camino emphasizes more than just classroom success. Figure 6, which presents comparisons with the 2014 CCSSE survey results, shows most students feel ECC emphasizes providing financial and personal support as well, with 87% saying ECC emphasizes providing the support they need to succeed in college. The 62% of students indicating ECC emphasizes helping students cope with non-academic responsibilities increased from 29% to 62%. There is also an increase in those who believe ECC emphasizes cross cultural interactions (77%).

*Figure 6: ECC's Financial and Personal Support to Students*

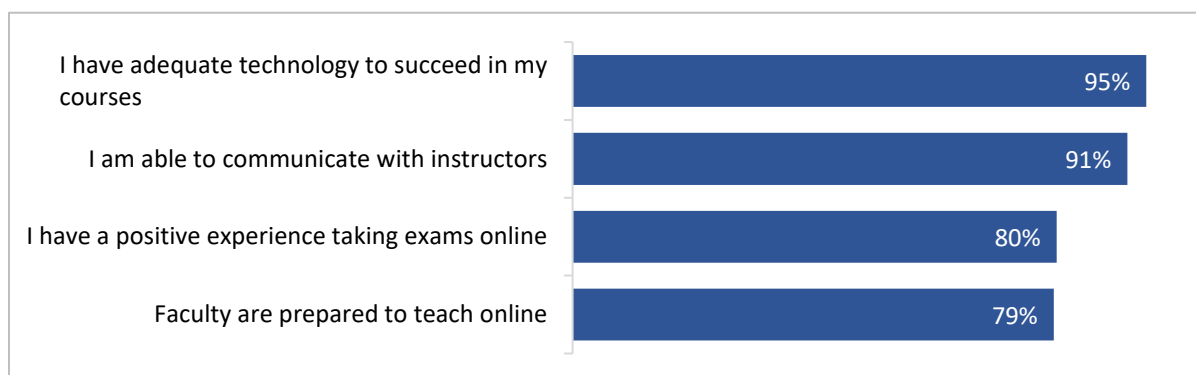


## Classroom Instruction

### ***Most students were able to transition to online learning***

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the on-campus activities and offerings at El Camino ceased during the Spring 2021 semester. As a consequence, the Student Campus Climate Survey required including questions specific to distance learning, which were not part of the 2018 version of the survey. Figure 7 shows students feel they had the technology they needed to succeed and that they were able to communicate with instructors in the online environment. One in five students also reported negative experiences with taking exams online, mainly due to issues with technology and the proctoring software used by instructors. One in five students also felt faculty were not prepared to teach online during Spring 2021.

*Figure 7: Students' Perception of Online Environment*



### *Students have an affirmative perception of interactions with instructors*

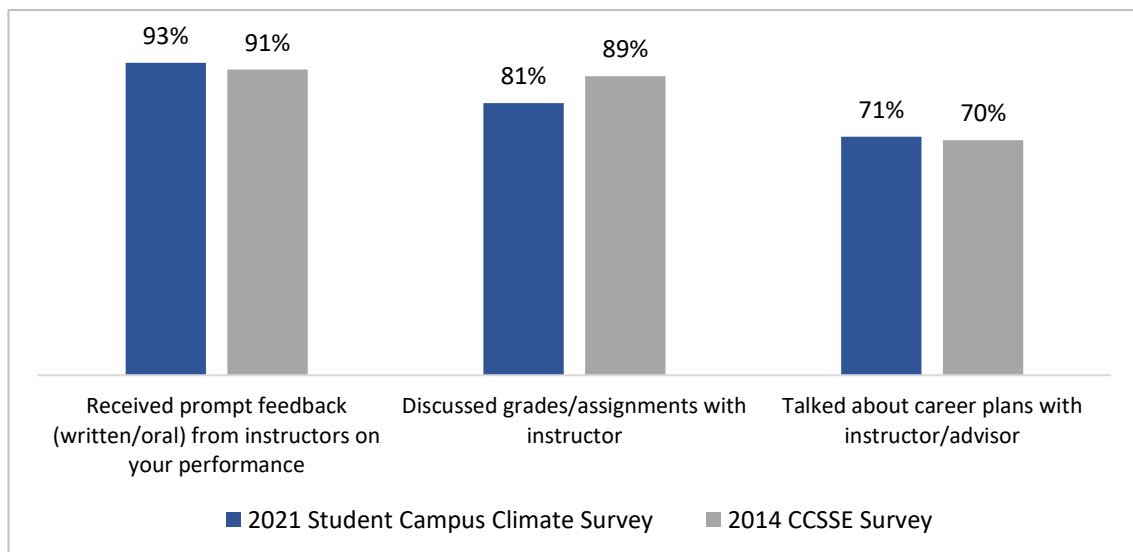
Students continue to indicate positive experiences with El Camino instructors. Table 3 shows there is not much of a change from the 2018 Student Campus Climate Survey. Students continue to feel comfortable approaching instructors both in and out of class time. Instructors are available to students outside of class time. They support diverse perspectives and include diverse materials in class. Instructors are also viewed as being fair and concerned about student well-being.

*Table 3: Students' Interactions with Instructors 2018 vs. 2021*

	2018	2021
Overall, instructors at ECC treat students fairly	94%	95%
Instructors welcome and encourage students to contribute diverse perspectives in class	94%	93%
My instructors provide a climate in which I am comfortable asking questions about the subject they are teaching	95%	92%
For the most part, my instructors include course materials that reflect/include a variety of diverse populations	95%	92%
My instructors are available outside of class time if I have questions or need help	91%	92%
Overall, instructors at ECC are genuinely concerned about my well-being	90%	91%
I feel comfortable talking to my instructors outside of class	88%	88%

CCSSE survey questions included in the 2021 Student Campus Climate Survey show similar results in terms of students' interaction with instructors. Figure 8 below indicates students are able to get feedback from their instructors about grades and performance, while 70% also talk to their instructors about career plans.

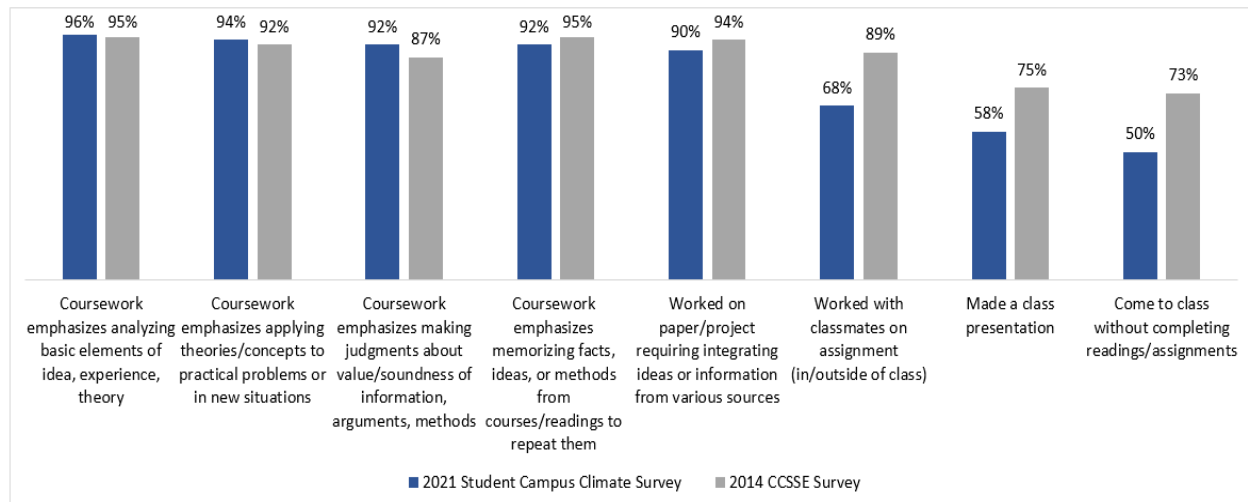
*Figure 8: Students' Interactions with Instructors 2014 CCSSE Survey vs. 2021 Campus Climate Survey*



### ***Most frequent classwork performed by students revolve around critical thinking and memorization***

Students made judgements about the type of work they were asked to perform during the Spring 2021 semester. Figure 9 shows the percentage of students who indicated *Sometimes*, *Often*, or *Very Often* for each of these prompts. Overall, students feel like their assignments require critical thinking to analyze, judge, and integrate concepts. At the same time, they also feel they are being asked to memorize and repeat facts. The percentage of students who were asked to make a presentation decreased 17% from 2014. The percentage who worked with classmates on assignments decreased 21% from 2014. The pandemic and the rapid transition to remote environments likely played a role in this decline. On the other hand, the percentage of students who indicated coming to class without completing readings and assignments also decreased, with only half saying they had come unprepared.

*Figure 9: Type of Class Work Students Perform 2014 CCSSE Survey vs. 2021 Campus Climate Survey*

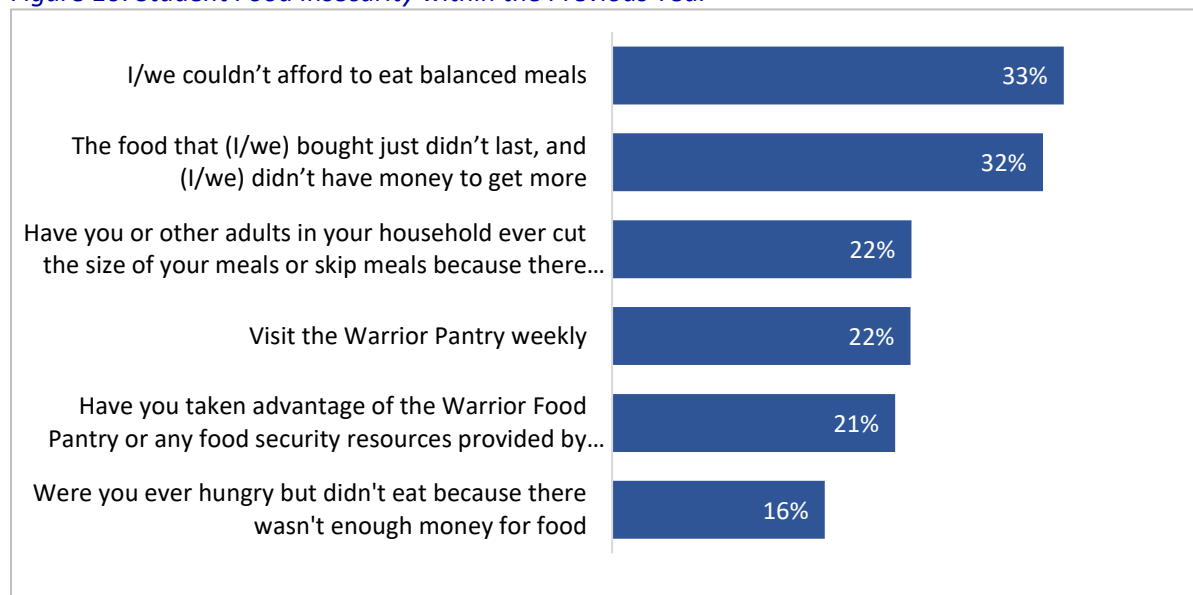


### ***Many students have challenges with food insecurity***

Students were asked about issues relating to food insecurity. Figure 10 shows approximately one in three respondents indicated they were not able to afford balanced meals or had food run out, but the same was true for more than half of the Black/African American students. Twenty-two percent of the respondents indicated they visited the Warrior Pantry, which was established after the 2018 Campus Climate Survey, at least once per week. However, only 12.5% of Black/African American students indicated they visited the Warrior Pantry one time per week. Even though a smaller percentage of males indicated not having enough food, compared to females, males (35%) were almost twice as likely to visit the Warrior Pantry at least once per week compared to females (19%). Despite the availability of resources like the Warrior Pantry, 16% of the respondents indicated they had been hungry but did not eat

because of a lack of money. The rate was double, at 33%, for Black/African American students. Female respondents (18%) went without food more often than male respondents (8%).

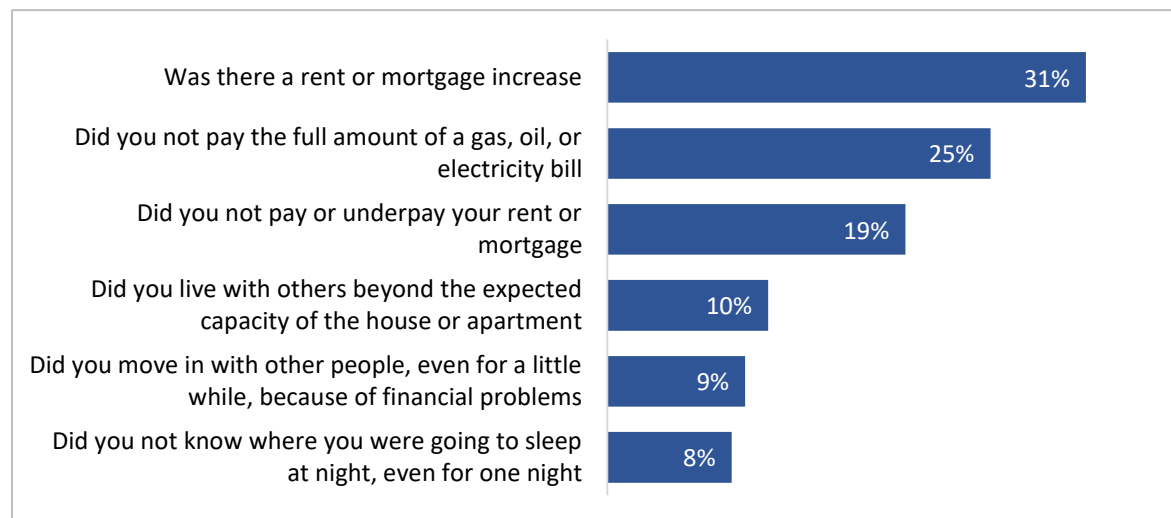
*Figure 10: Student Food Insecurity within the Previous Year*



***Housing cost increase mostly affected Black/African American, Latino and female students***

Similar to food insecurity, issues related to housing insecurity had a greater impact on some groups. Figure 11 shows some of these issues. While 31% of all respondents saw a rent or mortgage increase within the last year, 40% of Black/African American students and 37% of Hispanics dealt with that issue. This also had a greater impact on females, with 33% experiencing a housing increase, compared to 25% for males. A quarter of the respondents indicated having difficulty keeping current with utility bills during the year. The rate for Black/African American respondents was more than double at 52%. While 8% of respondents indicated experiencing at least one night when they were not sure where they would sleep, 16% of Black/African American students said the same.

Figure 11: Student Housing Insecurity within the Previous Year



## Conclusions

### ***What is ECC doing well and in what areas can the College improve?***

- El Camino College continues to enjoy a positive reputation among its students. Respondents think campus facilities are well maintained although more improvement is needed so that students feel safer at night.
- Students feel more connected to the college. Being able to access different parts of El Camino digitally may have a role in that connectedness. Since they have had to interact with the college digitally, they have frequent exposure to college announcements and may choose to participate in more events.
- Students feel the college supports students of all groups, however, many still experience negative interactions based on one more of the following: economics, age, gender, race, sexual orientation, homelessness, parental status, immigration status, political and religious affiliation, or disability.
- Interactions with faculty and staff are generally positive and most students feel ECC employees are genuinely concerned for them.
- Students were able to access a variety of supports, from standard college entities like financial aid and counseling, to support services like the Warrior Pantry or mental health services. The online nature of campus operations may have allowed more students to get the supports they needed.
- Students generally indicate instructors are available and supportive, and that their coursework requires them to engage in complex thought to tie concepts together. However, the challenges of distance learning may have lessened opportunities to collaborate and present work to peers.

- Many students are struggling with food insecurity, particularly female and Black/African American students. Despite demonstrating a greater need for support than other groups, female and Black/African American students utilize the Warrior Pantry in smaller percentages than their need would suggest.
- Issues relating to housing insecurity/homelessness play a part in the lives of many students, particularly, Black/African American, Hispanic, and female students.

#### ***How does the student experience vary by different characteristics?***

- Some students who had negative experiences on campus felt were based on their demographics. A higher percentage of Black/African American students, Asian males, and students with disabilities indicated experiencing a negative experience with El Camino staff or students than other students who responded to the survey.
- Black/African American students also manifested lower agreement that College faculty and staff reflected the diversity of the student body.
- Issues relating to food and housing insecurity have disproportionately impacted Black/African American students compared to other groups. Women are also experiencing more difficulty than men.

#### ***How has the campus climate changed since 2018, the last time this survey was administered?***

- Respondents expressed greater concern for their well-being on the part of campus police.
- Students have more positive feelings about their ability to accomplish their educational goals within their planned time and a higher percentage would choose ECC again if they had to start over.
- Students feel less connected to others academically than they did in 2018. Online education has provided less opportunity to interact and share ideas with peers. However, students indicate greater awareness and participation in campus events. A greater percentage also indicate a greater connection to ECC than in 2018.
- Respondents felt increased support in obtaining the financial aid they needed, succeeding in the college, interacting with students from different backgrounds, and coping with non-academic responsibilities.
- Less students attended class without doing homework, however, a decreased percentage of students worked with peers and made presentations in class.

## Suggested Recommendations

Informed by the 2021 Student Campus Climate survey results, the following are suggested recommendations when implementing continuous improvement actions addressing the College students' experience:

- Continue improving campus lighting since some students feel less safe during evening classes.
- Continue offering opportunities to connect to services remotely so that students who can regularly come to campus as well as those who cannot are able to access the information they need at the time they need it.
- Continue offering online options for course sections. Many students have other obligations that limit their opportunities to come to campus. Distance learning options offer the flexibility students need to meet their goals.
- Expand faculty, staff, and student knowledge and best practices related to equity, diversity, and inclusion. A third of all students feel they have had a negative experience based upon one or more of these characteristics: race, age, gender identity, national origin, disability status among others.
- Review the use of proctoring software to ensure students are not being negatively impacted. The use of proctoring software was an issue for some students, from technical complaints of software impacting other computer programs, to equity issues (small living spaces shared with family members, noise, etc.).
- Continue offering professional development opportunities that help instructors and staff stay up to date with current academic technology trends and strategies.
- Instructors should develop and share strategies for increasing peer interaction online, as well as in in-person sections.
- Develop and disseminate comprehensive program maps so students know which courses are needed to complete a program. Maps should also be developed for students who are exploring their goals.
- Explore alternatives to better address food and housing insecurities. Black/African American, Latino, and female students experience more negative impact than other student populations.

## How Can the ECC Community Use the Student Campus Climate Survey Results?

The ECC community can use the results of this survey as they strive for continuous quality improvement. From division level to individual instructor, members of the campus community can reflect on the outcomes and recommendations of this survey in relation to the practices under their purview. Where appropriate, administrators, faculty, and staff can implement



strategies to address the concerns ECC students have indicated. Campus programs may want to incorporate some of these strategies into their annual or longer-term plans. Some strategies can be implemented immediately, without going through a planning process. Either way, they can use the items in the survey as metrics to determine how impactful their strategies are on students' perceptions.